

DONNA ERICKSON'S

BEST BITES



Make Slow-Cooker Oatmeal for an Easy Morning Routine

It would be an apt description to call my husband a "musher" even though he has never trained, led or raced a dog team of huskies. Simply put, he likes to wake up in the morning to a hot pot of coffee and prepare a big, steaming bowl of homemade oatmeal, or what our family has called it for generations - "mush."

He makes the "mush" by dumping a cup of steel-cut oatmeal that we buy for only 25 cents per cup in bulk at our neighborhood store into a cooking pot on the stove. He adds water, raisins, and chopped fresh fruit such as an apple or a pear, then tosses in a pinch of salt and cinnamon. It's ready to eat in about 30 minutes, just as he opens the sports section of the morning paper.

His has been a fine and dandy routine for years until he recently started a new job as an assistant superintendent of a school that starts in the wee hours of the morning and is located on the opposite end of town from our home. The new early wake-up call prompted a happy discovery: slow-cooker oatmeal. Now he tosses the ingredients in our slow cooker the night before and sets it on low so that the healthy "mush" is hot and ready to enjoy the moment he wakes up. It's a "musher's" dream come true!

If your family knows and likes their oats, give this easy and super cheap version a try. For about 4 servings, you'll need:

- ♦ 1 cup steel-cut oats (not quick-cooking or instant oats)
- ♦ 3 cups water
- ♦ A pinch of salt
- ♦ Dried fruit to taste such as apricots, raisins and cranberries
- ♦ 1/2 cup chopped fresh fruit such as an apple or a pear
- ♦ Cinnamon to taste (optional)

Here's the fun: Let your kids measure and pour ingredients in the slow cooker before they go to bed. Stir, cover and set cooker at low heat. In the morning, stir and serve. Vary toppings from day to day such as brown sugar, cinnamon sugar, honey, nuts or chopped banana. Add milk if you wish.

ALTERNATIVE IDEA

Try this recipe with your rice cooker if it has a porridge or cereal function that cooks oatmeal. Place ingredients in a bowl and refrigerate the night before. Pour contents into the cooker in the morning, then turn it on. It will cook on its own for about 25 minutes while the family gets dressed.



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DRY STORAGE

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November 1, 2025 to April 4, 2026

(Measured from front of trailer tongue to boat or motor end)

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PETS OF THE WEEK

For more information call
The A.R.K.
477 State Route 26, Lacon,
at 309-246-4275,
or email us at
arkanimalshelter@yahoo.
com.



Atlas

Atlas is an athletic, playful and friendly three-year-old pup. He is treat motivated, and he loves people, affection and attention. He is housebroken and likes to learn new things (for treats!) so he is easy to train. He'd probably be best as the only dog in the home, but he's so much fun and company, he's the only one you'll need! Atlas is neutered, micro-chipped and current on all his shots.



Pickles

Beautiful little Pickles is only five months old, so she is still just a kitten. She is definitely a sweet pickle who gets along well with other kitties and enjoys gazing out the window on the kitty perch in Daisy's Room at the shelter. She is spayed, micro-chipped and current on all her shots.

KLEIN

SELF STORAGE

2

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- Neil DeGrasse Tyson

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PENDING

Lacon:
1226 Second Street

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NEW LISTING

Lacon:
000 County Road 1300E Road

Build your dream home on this 4.470 acres property. Located on flying Hills Road just east of Lacon. Pasture is currently being bailed for Hay. Soil evaluation has been completed. Schedule a private showing today. **\$65,000**



SOLD

Sparland:
402 Carolyn Street
Well maintained brick ranch home on a corner lot. 2 Bedroom, 2 full bathrooms. Living room could be converted to 3 bedroom/primary suite. Main floor laundry, finished basement with fireplace and 2nd kitchen. Schedule a private showing today. **\$199,000.**

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